

TRANSLATION FROM "AFTENPOSTENS" -- 13 October 1975

"CIA Director Reminisces about Wartime in Norway"

Minneapolis, 12 October 1975

The evening before the weekend on which King Olav came to Minneapolis there was occasion for another, very special, visit with Norwegian overtones. This was a meeting between the Chief of the American Intelligence Service and 47 Norwegian-Americans who had been his comrades-in-arms engaged in sabotage in Norway during WW II.

At that time, the now 55-year-old CIA chief was a major in the American army and the leader of 80 Norwegians--and Norwegian-Americans--who were part of a group that had been parachuted over Snaasa in North Troendelag in March of 1945. The objective was to blow up the railroad lines which the Germans used for transporting their troops back from Finland.

Seventeen of the 80 men were killed in the course of their missions in Norway. All of them had been specially trained in parachuting, skiing and guerrilla warfare for this assignment. The 47 survivors, now all American citizens, had all managed to gather for the emotional reunion Friday night in Minneapolis. They came from New York in the East, California in the West, Canada in the North and Panama in the South and included people from many different religious denominations, and different professions. There were lawyers, shipmasters, insurance people, a hog farmer and--finally--a chief of intelligence.

During the war they all belonged to a secret organization called "NORSO," an abbreviation for the Norwegian Special Operations Group, which in turn was affiliated with the American espionage--and sabotage--organization "OSS." They were selected because of their Norwegian descent and many were at that time still Norwegian citizens, e.g. sailors who had been torpedoed on an Atlantic crossing and rescued and brought to the USA. The only one without any Norwegian background was COLBY himself, the commanding officer, whose background was Irish.

Leif EIDE and Adolph HOGFOSS were the two Minnesota residents who had taken the initiative for the reunion; EIDE, from Minneapolis, and HOGFOSS from New Ulm, were thus in charge for this group meeting again for the first time since the operations in Norway. From beginning to end the evening was one marked by many and strong feelings.

COLBY made a short speech in which he said that the "OSS" had been the forerunner of CIA, and that the group gathered for the reunion had "developed a spirit and enthusiasm that had left permanent marks both in the USA and in Norway."

There was a very touching moment when the names of those killed in action in Norway or of those who died later were read aloud. The reading of each name was accompanied by the sounds of the bugler, Fred JOHANSEN, who had performed this duty for NORSO at the time. JOHANSEN now has an insurance company in Jamestown but he had brought out his bugle a couple of months ago in preparation for this occasion.

CIA-sjefen minnes krigstiden i Norge

Aftenpostens medarbeider ARVE HOFF

Minneapolis, 12. oktober.

Kvelden før kong Olav i helgen kom til Minneapolis, var byen åsted for en annen, høyst spesiell begivenhet med norsk tilnærning. Da møttes nemlig sjefen for den amerikanske etterretningstjeneste og 47 norsk-amerikanere, som var hans kamphænder ved sabotasjeaksjoner i Norge under 2. verdenskrig.

Den 55-årige CIA-sjefen William E. Colby var dengang major i den amerikanske hær og ledet en gruppe på 80 nordmenn og norsk-amerikanere, som i mars 1945 ble sluppet ned i fallskjerm ved Svåsa i Nord-Trøndelag. Hensikten var å sprengne jernbanelinjer

som tyskerne brukte til å transportere tropper tilbake fra Finland.

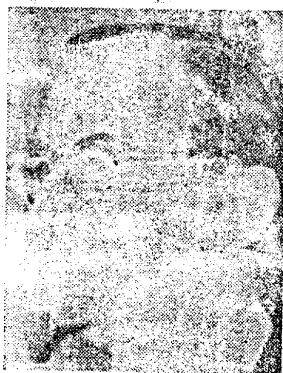
17 av de 80, som var spesialtreinet i fallskjermhopping, skiløping og gullfjell, ble drept under oppdragene i Norge. Av de gjenlevende hadde imidlertid hele 47, som nå sandlige av amerikanske stats-

borgere, funnet veien til den følelsesfylte gjenforeningen i Minneapolis fredag kveld.

De 47 kom fra New York i øst, California i vest, Canada i nord og Panama i syd, og omfattet folk fra mange slags kirkesamfunn og

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William E. Colby

yrker, som advokater, skipsførere, forsikringsfolk, en grisefarmer og altså en etterretningssjef.

Under krigen tilhørte de en hemmelig organisasjon som ble kalt «NORSO», en forkortelse for den norske, spesielle operasjonsgruppe, som igjen var tilknyttet den amerikanske spionasje- og sabotasjeorganisasjon «OSS». De ble plukket ut på grunn av sin norske avstammning. Mange var på det tidspunkt fremdeles norske statsborgere, f.eks. sjømenn som var blitt torpedert i Atlanterhavsfart, og som var blitt reddet i land til USA. Bare sjefen selv, Colby, var uten norsk bakgrunn. Han er av irsk avstammning.

Det var to Minnesota-beboere, Leif Elde fra Minneapolis og Adolph Hogtoss fra New Ulm, som hadde tatt initiativet til gjenforeningen — gruppens første møte siden aksjonene i Norge. Fra først til sist ble det en kveld preget av mange og sterke følelser.

I en liten tale til forsamlingen bemerket Colby at «OSS» hadde vært en forløper for CIA, og at den gruppen som nå var samlet, hadde utviklet en ånd og en entusiasme som etterlot seg varige spor i såvel USA som Norge.

Et dypt gripende innslag fikk man ved opplesningen av navnene på kamphænder som enten ble drept i Norge eller er gått bort senere. Opplesningen var svært enkelt navn ble ledsaget av trompettoner fra NORSO. Det var Fredrik Hagen, dommer i den lokale etterretningstjenesten, som hadde hentet frem trompeten for et par måneder siden.

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Mr. Colby:

You will be interested in the attached clipping from the 13 October 1975 issue of "Aftenpostens" concerning the 12 October reunion in Minneapolis which you attended.

The clipping was recently forwarded by Mr. Hans Ringvold, with whom you met on 13 June 1975. Mr. Ringvold, on 5 September 1975, was elected President of the Norwegian Defense Association. At a formal dinner on that occasion, he was seated next to Norwegian Prime Minister Trygve Bratteli.